Please refer to final version in citation:
Jerne, C. (2024). “Conclusion: Resilient social violence”. Pp. 289-305. In Dalla Chiesa, N., Jerne, C. (Eds.) (2024) Against the Mafia: The Classic Italian Essays. Jerne, C. (Trans). London: Palgrave Macmillan

14. Conclusion

Resilient social violence

By Christina Jerne

Abstract

This concluding chapter summarises some of the key insights from the chapters of the book. It argues that the mafia transcends being just an organization of criminals, but might be read as a particular form of paralegal power, founded on resilient expressions of social violence. Drawing on empirical examples from the texts gathered in the anthology, two themes are identified are being distinctive to mafia power throughout its history: political entrepreneurship and social poverty. The chapter traces several details of these dimensions and suggests that it could be beneficial to explore them in a comparative manner, that is, by inserting them in a broader and more global conversation on persistent forms of paralegal power.

Keywords: social poverty, intimidation, parasitism, paralegal power, capital, political entrepreneurship.

Whenever I type the word "mafia", Microsoft Word autocorrects it to "the" mafia. Yet in the Italian language, mafia also appears without the definite article (*la* mafia). Most of the time in translating this collection of essays, I have had to surrender to this definite article, as translating "mafia" without it would result in unexplained linguistic awkwardness. However, here, outside the format of translation, I can elaborate on my hesitation to automatically use "the". It is not simply a grammatical question, but a matter of empirical categorization.

Much of the English-language literature on "mafia" focuses on a set of actors that belong to a relatively stable organization that Microsoft Word justly calls "the mafia". Essentially it primarily treats mafia as a specific type of organized crime, or in Federico Varese's words, "a group that attempts to regulate and control the production and distribution of a given commodity or service unlawfully" (Varese 2010: 14-17). As Giovanni Falcone rightly noted, while "mafia is most certainly organized crime, not all organized crime is mafia" (Falcone 1990: 66). In Varese's optic, the particular specialization of mafia would be in the supply of protection (Varese ivi; and also Gambetta 1993). Given the penal impetus of the discipline, the focus of much criminological work is on the inner and outer workings of a concrete set of actors who belong to a group.[1] Yet in the Italian language, mafia can also be a noun that describes a type of individual (*il mafioso),* or an ontological quality (*mafiositá*). It also appears as an adverb that qualifies a particular kind of behaviour (*mafiosamente*) or a type of action (to be guilty of *mafia*). The different parts of speech that the term "mafia" can inhabit in Italian suggest that there is far more to the term than merely a collective of criminals.[2]

Deborah Puccio-Den has recently addressed the semantic slipperiness of the term "mafia" in her book *Mafiacraft* (2021), making it the explicit focus of her ethnographic work. In it, she illustrates the (hyper-)performative nature of the term "mafia", not only in the sense that, in different phases in history, mafia manifests itself in the terms through which it is uttered. But mostly it does so, she innovatively argues, in the terms through which it is not. At the levels of both direct mafia relations and of institutional and popular conceptualizations, policies and collective practices, the mafia phenomenon is defined by silences, absences, denial and *omertá*. In other words, what is not said is fundamental to how mafia exists today.

In a sense, *Mafiacraft* speaks well to the original spirit that led Nando dalla Chiesa to write the previous edition of this very book in 2010. What drove him to bring together an anthology of classical texts was what he calls an "amnesia" of our time, a silence (or even a silencing) of the collective memory of previous examples of mafia expressions and anti-mafia actions. Countering this silence is a political act, one that has long characterized the anti-mafia struggle and one that we have

---

[1] Paradoxically, however, although the focus is often on the mafia organization, few studies refer to organizational dynamics and make active use of the organizational literature. An exception is the work of Maurizio Catino (2019), whose work on the mafia may be properly considered organizational.

[2] When I address "mafia" in this sense, I use "the", and when I address it as a form of power or a social phenomenon I omit the article.

ascribed to with this new edition. My own intent has been to broaden the public reach of this memory work through the act of translation, as well as the selection of newer texts that might have more contact points with contemporary readers. Although the Angloscene provides a shared international space for learning and acting, often the necessity of translating into a dominant regime of thought risks flattening empirical diversity and even directly silencing minority languages and their situated conceptions of globalized terms (Alhojärvi & Hyvärinen 2020:467-477). By speaking back to the Angloscene in its own language, my aim has been to give voice to some of the vast body of Italian cultural heritage that lies behind the mafia issue. This is my own way of being against "the" mafia.

Indeed, what emerges from the texts collected here is that mafia transcends a mere organization of criminals.[3] From the early work of Leopoldo Franchetti in the mid-nineteenth century to Nando dalla Chiesa's analysis of the 'Ndrangheta's violent migration style, in this book we find a historically situated sociology of paralegal power.[4]

This volume offers a longitudinal overview of the Italian mafia phenomenon through the eyes of those who have questioned it. As such it also enables more precise terms to be developed for criminological comparison.[5] However, my own interest in this material lies in its ability to make apparent the diversity and complexity of this peculiar form of power. Because Nando dalla Chiesa's introductory chapter has already addressed the parallel complexity of the collective actions that have *resisted* this form of power, in concluding, I will address the other side of the coin. In particular, I will attempt to answer the following question: which elements of these classical readings of the mafia specificity might inform a broader global research agenda on persistent forms of paralegal power?

With rather broad brushstrokes, here I introduce two themes that, in my view, run through all of the twelve essays, written over the span of 144 years, namely political entrepreneurship and social poverty. The combination of these factors, the first being an ability, the second being a contextual setting, result in the noteworthy resilience that various mafias have demonstrated in forging, reinforcing and maintaining power relations. I address these themes not only to summarize, but also to galvanize a wider debate on the resilient forms of social violence[6] that transcend the mafia specificity.

Political Entrepreneurship

The entrepreneurial dimension of organized crime has been amply theorized within the discipline of criminology (see Kleemans (2013) for an overview). Pino Arlacchi's *Mafia business: Mafia ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (1986) sets a precedent specifically for tracing the mafia's entrepreneurial

---

[3] Although it most certainly is also an organization of criminals.

[4] See also Nando dalla Chiesa's reflections on mafia as a specific form of power (Dalla Chiesa 2017).

[5] Including ones that compare organizations.

[6] Social violence includes both direct and indirect forms of violence, i.e. personal, cultural and structural violence as in Johan Galtung's understanding (1969).

dimensions, focusing in particular on mafia capital and its relation to the legal economy. These insights resonate with many of the texts in this collection. Leopoldo Franchetti analysed intimidatory associations that kept the price of milling high through the creation of violent monopolies in the late nineteenth century. Corrado Stajano reflected on the relation between the squalor of Calabrian urban development and the illegal revenues that produced it. In truth, almost all these essays touch upon some economic aspect of the mafia, whether this be a question of profit, labour or a particular mode of production or exchange. In fact, there is more to economy than the self-interested *homo economicus* and market efficiency, namely the two interpretative models taken from economics that dominate criminological approaches to organized crime. This is why I am taking the entrepreneurial nature of mafia beyond the terms in which it is most commonly discussed, speaking of it instead as political entrepreneurship.

In this, I am following the suggestion of Carlo Alberto dalla Chiesa when he was asked about the effectiveness of abolishing banking secrecy to counter the mafia:

"The real question does not lie there (…) The fight against the mafia shouldn't be carried out in banks or in Bagheria, or on a case by case basis, but in a global manner." (dalla Chiesa 1982)

If the response to the mafia must be "global"— meaning in this case that it should work across sectors, classes and territories – this implies that mafia power also operates in this way.

As Giovanni Falcone notes in Chapter 11, what differentiates the mafia from many other forms of organized crime is its ambition and success in controlling a territory. Other than monopolizing markets and extracting profits, another strategy for exercising this control is to forge and maintain an intimate relationship with institutional power (see Mosca, Colajanni and La Torre's chapters for different versions of this insight). However, what is most striking in my view is not so much its ability to influence and infiltrate Politics with a capital P. Rather, it is the variety of sites and infrastructures that are used to exert social control that is remarkable.

One might say that the mafia at once falls short of and exceeds the ambition of having a monopoly on violence (the state in Max Weber's definition). It fails because it is more convenient to feed off the state than to replace it.[7] Replacing the state in the monopoly on violence would in fact require an immense amount of effort and resources. This is not simply a matter of practical infeasibility, but a question of disposition: it would contradict the mafia's inherently conservative and opportunistic nature. The mafia is highly energy-efficient, as it aims to maintain power with the least amount of effort and the greatest amount of personal gain (Jerne 2020). At the same time, the mafia's aims exceed the monopoly on violence because they go beyond the *legitimacy* to exert force over a territory. In fact, mafia power is inherently parasitic; the consensus-building work it carries out to

[7] This is why I use the term "paralegal power" rather than "extra-legal power"; *para* signifies more than, while *extra* signifies outside. Here I follow historian Salvatore Lupo, who notes that, in order to label connections between socio-political powers and criminality as being mafia-like in character, it is a prerequisite that these operate within modern state institutions (2004:51).

dominate territories has been *founded* historically on the exploitation of other existing forms of legitimized power (e.g. the democracy, the kingdom, the corporation, the patriarchy, the fiefdom, the church, the fandom). In this respect, one might say that it does not seek to have a legitimate monopoly on violence, but instead seeks to exploit (even, sometimes paradoxically, by opposing) the instruments of those who hold it. Importantly, it does so on the grounds of a conception of power that may be considered *absolutist*. For it considers itself to be above any political (and dare I say even spiritual) form of liability.

So when I say political entrepreneurship, I not (only) mean the ability to navigate and infiltrate institutional state settings, for this would be reductive of its reach.[8] What I mean to highlight is instead the efficiency and ability with which it imposes, enforces and maintains its influence and control over *that which grants power over a collective* of varying size. Examples from this book include a village (Franchetti, N. dalla Chiesa, Fava), a city (C. A. dalla Chiesa), a parish (Don Diana), a state (Mosca, La Torre), a household (Stajano), a fiefdom (Colajanni, Levi), a market (Fava, La Torre), a diaspora (Fava, N. dalla Chiesa, Falcone) and an enterprise (Franchetti, Levi). And the list could go on.

In fact, its particular force lies in *combining* its social control over these different levels. This is where the entrepreneurial element comes in. In my view the mafia is not so much defined by its ability to *fill* power vacuums (as is often theorised) as it is by the incredible inventiveness it demonstrates in assembling various assets that are already powerful and then subjugating them to itself. This does not necessarily imply that these powers are fully realized (as in "actualized"), but only (forgive the word play) that the mafia has realized (as in "become aware of") its potential. Indeed, as Giovanni Falcone notes (Chapter 11), the mafia is a low-risk investor, mainly intervening in a given asset when its potential has already become apparent. This is not only the case for material goods that are traded (as in the case of cigarettes in Chapter 11), but also in the case of norms, skills, people or infrastructures that may be of use in a particular time and place.

The sanctioning of certain beliefs and practices is the most apparent technique for exerting social control. Examples from this book of behaviour that the mafia finds displeasing include: belonging to certain political parties that are strong enough to threaten the ruling class (Colajanni, Levi), having certain sexual freedoms that may undermine the hyper-masculinity of the mafia patriarchy (Stajano, Falcone) and exercising religious freedom in a way that risks unmasking the purely symbolic and instrumental function of Catholicism for the mafia (Don Diana).

But there are also other, less normative and more pragmatic ways of gaining social control. Think of the role played by corrupt lawyers and bureaucrats in enforcing mafia power: their technical abilities are increasingly necessary to navigate EU funds and international legislation and to secure local contracts. Or how isolated migrants who have difficulty accessing formal work in their new base

[8] Nor do I intend agonistic or oppositional, for the mafia is actually an intrinsically conservative power (see Mosca, Chapter 4).

represent excellent recruits for mafia labour. Or, finally, how cement, with its highly malleable nature, acts as a perfect base for making different types of investment, from real estate to transforming industrial and urban waste (Jerne 2018). In this sense, it is possible to think of mafia power in Latourian terms (1993:201), not so much as a strength, but rather as an array of weaknesses. This means that mafias thrive because the objects around them (e.g. social norms, corrupt public officials, migrant bodies, waste legislation) are configured and expressed in a manner that increases their movement and influence. The entrepreneurial talent lies in seeing and seizing these weaknesses and transforming them into opportunities, especially in their capacity to adapt to any changes in circumstances in an optic of self-preservation (see Mosca, chapter 4). A form of aggregative shapeshifting, if you will.

Mafia is accordingly a form of governance (Varese 2010: 14) that skilfully competes and/or collaborates with other forms of established power. The Sicilian cases described at the beginning of this book exemplify the political transition from feudalism to constitutionalism, which since the unification of Italy have primarily been feudal lords and public officials of varying rank. Franchetti's text in particular demonstrates the intimate relationship between mafia and the democratization of violence, that is, how the mafia capably navigates and appropriates the conflict between a social order based on arbitrary violence and unlawful dominance on the one hand, and the rule of law and democracy on the other. This is an issue that is echoed in much of the postcolonial literature (e.g. Bayart 1989), one which ought to be explored further in a comparative manner.

Indeed, mafia and other forms of organized crime may be read as the constitutive elements of state-formation processes. As Charles Tilly famously posited (Tilly 1985), modern European states are the descendants of mediaeval warlord gangs, suggesting the benefits of interpreting organized crime and mafia along a spectrum of armed groups, the state or empire being the most organized and effective at exerting social control. This makes mafia studies important reference points for the rich variety of forms of state that exist in the world. This is the case for those that do not live up to the western liberal-democratic ideal, such as kleptocracies, weak or failed states and gangster states, as explored by Katherine Hirshfeld (2015). But it is also useful in tracing the differences from and similarities to forms of political entrepreneurship that exist within and/or alongside those nation states that do live up to it, such as lobbies and non-governmental interest groups, and especially highly profitable (illegal and legal) enterprises (e.g. energy, minerals, finance, agriculture, weapons, drugs), which play a determining role in shaping the policies of perfectly "healthy" liberal democracies.

Further, the fact that mafia emerged in tandem with the state-building project in Italy and is thus characterized historically by the particular conflict and synthesis between the rule of law and its negation, should not hinder scholars from exploring the convergences with other forms of paralegal social control that are not epitomized by the nation-state. In fact, the growing body of literature that acknowledges the numerous forms of licit and illicit governance that populate the world today and which are *not* the state (e.g. Klein 1999; Comaroff & Comaroff 2006, Nordstrom 2007, Rodgers and Hazen 2014) could benefit from and be beneficial to mafia studies. In particular, the insights these

essays offer on the role played by persistent adaptability might be equally relevant for the study of anything from extractive multinational corporations to ethnic militias to religious colonisers. Indeed, these texts demonstrate that mafia's resilience and ability to adapt to changes is perhaps more fundamental to its mode of dominating than is its particular relation to a political status quo.

Social poverty

With the obvious exception of the one text written by a man of arms,[9] almost every text in this book expressly underlines that armed repression is a useless or even counterproductive approach to confronting mafia. This general agreement is not based on these authors' propensity towards pacifism. Nor does it stem from a particular political colour, many of which are represented here. Instead it originates from the simple sociological insights which these writers share: tactically the mafia capitalizes on social poverty. Thus mafia must be countered at the roots, which means reducing social poverty.

I use the term "social poverty" to speak broadly of deficiencies in different types of capital. Here I am drawing rather loosely on the work of Pierre Bourdieu, whose sociological expansion of the Marxist notion of capital offers a valuable set of analytical tools to differentiate between the various kinds of assets that allow individuals to maintain and reproduce their position in their social field (Bourdieu 1986). An individual or group that is scarcely equipped, either in quantity *or* in quality, with any or many of these different forms of capital is vulnerable to the predatory political entrepreneurship I have described so far. As such, people or groups who are poor in capital can contribute to enabling mafia power and are thus considered an integral part of the mafia phenomenon (rather than "the mafia organization"). This returns to the point I made in introducing this essay: mafia is not merely an organization one is affiliated to or not, but a paralegal form of power that is perpetuated through the opportunistic exploitation of a set of social conditions.

The most obvious one is the lack of financial capital. Most literature on the mafia (and more broadly, on crime) stresses the lack for financial means as a structural factor that pushes the marginalized to make ends meet with whatever means possible. The lower classes thus constitute the social strata that are drawn on to perform all kinds of labour that enforces mafia power. Threatening. Policing. Stealing. Dealing drugs. Killing. But also simply not-collaborating with formal justice and keeping secrets. In fact, non-violent and formal types of labour are most common. Office clerks, farmers, firemen, cleaners, bureaucrats and administrators: these types of remunerated work are often offered in exchange for loyalties and favours, aiding the mafia in its parasitic exploitation of the

---

[9] In truth, even General dalla Chiesa spoke of the necessity of diversifying the strategies to contain the mafia phenomenon. His long experience on the field inevitably taught him that putting a group of Mafiosi behind bars would not eradicate the problem. Indeed, he goes as far as stating that it is ordinary citizens who in fact pay for mafia privileges, citizens who are entitled to these assets (which he defines as rights), he implicitly suggests, but are denied them. He continues by saying: "Let's take this power from the mafia, let's make their subordinates our allies". In other words, he believes that guaranteeing ordinary people their fundamental rights will automatically lead to a weakening of mafia power.

infrastructure of the established power. Offering employment is one of the most elementary services the mafia offers and is the basis on which the mafia, a ruling élite (see Mosca), builds its consensus and labour force.

Because the mafia capitalizes on poverty and unemployment, many have argued that it caters to the lack of welfare, social justice and redistributive policies enforced by the state (Dolci, Don Diana). In this perspective, mafia has also been presented as a form of defensive justice drawn on by the weakest members of society, much like brigandry or the gang. But mafia is concomitantly framed as an *instrument* the strong use to oppress the weak (Colajanni, La Torre). Again, this stresses that mafia power lies outside the mafia (dalla Chiesa 1983) and as such is also instrumental for élites that are not "part" of the criminal organization as such. In fact, a person or group who is rich in financial capital is also instrumental and vital to mafia power. In this respect, we can speak of a lack in the moral qualities in the holder of financial capital. This capital is also socially poor, in the broader sense that its proprietor is driven by greed and seeks to accumulate wealth irrespective of its social origin or destination.

Another related form of poverty is the scarcity in cultural capital. This is mostly intended in the most obvious sense that extends the previous point: since education and primary socialization play a fundamental role in increasing social mobility or in creating the conditions for better prospects for income generation, illiterate and uneducated masses are excellent recruits for the mafia: both directly, in the sense that they agree to collaborate due to their poverty and ignorance, and indirectly, in the sense that they do not have the means or status to articulate any resistance. Carlo Levi's chapter tragically elaborates on this form of poverty, bringing in the example of a friend of a mafia-murdered trade unionist, Salvatore Carnevale, who recalls that they would study the dictionary at night. One of their most important forms of resistance.

But there are also other forms of cultural poverty that are fundamental to mafia power, which are not related to education and social standing. Ignorance, like plain and simple stupidity, is also useful to the mafia. The role of the cretin has been explored at length by both Giovanni Falcone and Nando dalla Chiesa (2014), as well as his father (this volume), who note the important part played by figures who have no capacity to read social situations or who lack technical knowledge on a given matter. The mafia uses these figures in a variety of ways. For example, they take advantage of their cluelessness and operate in their proximity, especially if they take up a specific role in society which is assumed to express a high level of competence. For example, the safest space in which to commit crime is under the nose of a naïve and trusting law enforcer. On other occasions they directly manipulate them, using them as pawns to obtain a certain end (see Falcone). These persons may be well-educated and filled with social prestige, but their lack of knowledge of certain cultural codes or their inability to read signs of mafia activity, makes them apt targets for mafia parasitism.

One may be powerful, wealthy and intelligent, but if one is isolated and lacking in social capital, then one is incredibly vulnerable, especially if the other mentioned qualities are present. This is Carlo

Alberto dalla Chiesa's important insight (Chapter 10) and is perhaps even what led to his assassination. On the other hand, one may be particularly rich in social capital and for this very reason especially meaningful for mafia power. This is either because the social capital in question is regarded as dangerous, as is testified by the various examples of peasant leaders and trade unionists who were murdered for their rising popularity and threatening social influence. In these cases, the social poverty consists in the surrounding society's lack of a response and inaction, and thus in the isolation of the individual or group who does not find the collective support needed to discourage or overwhelm mafia. Alternatively, one's networks may be directly useful in obtaining funds and social influence, thus making the person in question prone to instrumentalization or corruption. In this latter case we cannot speak of social poverty, but rather more properly of moral poverty. But as in the case of financial capital, the consequences and origins of this kind of moral poverty are also social.

It is important to stress that these factors should not be considered determining factors, but forces that contribute to nourishing this form of paralegal power. For there are many examples of financially poor, uneducated and even isolated individuals who found the willpower and courage to counter these forms of violence and chose to relate to mafia in different ways, despite the difficulties this caused them. In order to avoid structural determinism and a purely classist reading of mafia, a last form of capital must be at least mentioned, and that is what psychologists call emotional resilience.

We may consider emotional resilience as a particular expression of what Marci Cottingham calls emotional capital (Cottingham 2016:451): "a tripartite concept composed of emotion-based knowledge, management skills, and capacities to feel that links self-processes and resources to group membership and social location." In other terms, unlike terms such as emotional intelligence and personal character, emotional capital posits a direct relationship between macro-structures and micro-resources. Read within this framework, emotional resilience in particular illustrates the individual capacity to react to stressful or traumatic events and not let these overpower one's motivations and social actions. While this resilience is strongly influenced by one's social position and by how one is socialized, it is also a personal disposition and importantly, a choice.

Dealing with a resilient form of social violence necessarily requires an equal if not superior level of resilience, and particularly an emotional one. For mafia power has long been conceptualized in relation to a specific type of violence: intimidation.

Intimidation is a micro-psychological power device that operates through the manipulation of emotions (fear, primarily). The Italian term for this aggressive overbearingness, which lies at the base of intimidation, is *prepotenza*. In the texts it also appeared in the plural, *le prepotenze,* or as a noun describing a particular kind of person (*il prepotente*). In fact it has a broader semantic field that is not fully rendered by the term "intimidation", but the dictionary translations of *prepotenza* such as "arrogance", "overbearingness" and "high-handedness" do not in my view express the *actions* that characterize these qualities, so I have chosen to use the term "intimidation" instead. An indicator of

the cultural depth of this term is its Latin etymology: *praepŏtens*, which can be interpreted as a composite of prae- (before) potens (power), or "that which precedes power".[10] The emotional labour of intimidation can thus be considered a foundational stepping stone to enforcing mafia power.

This book overflows with examples of the mafia capitalizing on emotionally susceptible individuals and groups and subjugating them through the work of intimidation. This can either occur through direct means, such as by threatening, blackmailing and physically harming the individuals or collectives in question. But it can also happen indirectly, by isolating an individual from social or financial means. In this case, silence and silencing are the central weapons.

The types of response to these forms of violence, as well as their capacity to withstand the tests of time and pressure, have historically proved either to enforce or to diminish mafia power when emotional capital expresses itself in the form of meek[11] servitude and cowardice (a little discussed but central facet of *omertá*), or conversely, with courage and integrity. As Franchetti succinctly put it (chapter 2): "In such a social order, there is naturally no place for those who lack fangs and claws". The consequences of courage and integrity for mafia power is particularly apparent in the testimonies of relatives of mafia-related murder victims (Levi) or even of those who personally faced ostracism from corrupt political exponents (La Torre, Dalla Chiesa Sr., Falcone) and that forever changed society's approach to this form of power.

But there are also plenty of emotionally resilient people who valiantly stood up to these forms of oppression and were even murdered with little or no further consequence. This is why I am framing it under the notion of social poverty. Can a collective be more or less emotionally resilient? Absolutely so. Collective actions that followed or, even better, preceded intimidatory and violent behaviour have been determining factors in producing social change and diminishing mafia power. This occurs at the level of kin in the form of emotional and practical support, sometimes even by offering refuge and covering up for those who have countered mafia within their own families. It also expresses itself in the formal organization of labour in the many examples of cooperative enterprises that counter mafia exploitation and intimidation in various sectors (Jerne 2020). Emotional resilience is also collectively fostered through educational programmes that counter mafia negationism and instead carefully study it and commemorate its victims. Likewise, it is sustained by legislative frameworks that support the victims of extortion and other forms of mafia intimidation. If *prepotenza* precedes power, then the collective availability of emotional resilience determines the social effect that intimidation may have.

[10] I am grateful to Henrik Vigh for bringing this root to my attention.

[11] Interestingly, the term "intimidation" has its roots in the Latin word *timidus* (timid). In this sense, intimidation is the act of making someone timid, meek.

Conclusions

While the mafia is a criminal organization, mafia, without the article, is also a broader sociological unit of analysis that allows for a historically situated reading of a form of paralegal power. The essays we have compiled in this book provide different, sometimes even contradictory insights into this form of power. But what they share is the attentiveness to its parasitic relation to different faces of established power, be they regimes, charismatic figures, social norms, forms of government, or specific modes of production. This is the characteristic malleability of mafia, and one of its merits, from the sole perspective of endurance. A starting point for comparative inquiries into diverse forms of illicit or alternate power might be the very resilience of this particular form of political entrepreneurship, perhaps more so than its particular relation to a political status quo. In this respect, mafia studies provide a set of interesting insights for the anthropology of power, and particularly for questions of duration. These matters are relevant for empirical fields that are outside Italy, as well as for forms of power that do not necessarily conflict and conflate with the liberal nation-state ideal.

Similar arguments may be made on the foundations of this form of power, that is, on the role that social poverty and its counterpart, social violence, play for mafia and its reproduction. The exercise of social violence is an elementary feature of power that has long been explored by sociologists, anthropologists and political theorists alike. For the sake of mood, I will not attempt to make a list of examples of the different forms of social violence that are particularly significant in the world today. It would suffice to turn on the news in any country to find apt candidates for comparison. My hope is that, after reading this book, readers will be able to perform this operation with greater ease.

A simple point in closing. Countering mafia and other forms of social violence requires financially, culturally, socially and emotionally robust collectives and individuals. Socially violent groups thrive in societies that are scarcely equipped with these resources, either quantitatively or qualitatively. Addressing social poverty must therefore be viewed as a necessary instrument for the suppression of social violence. This is especially valid for those forms of power that, like mafia, have historically proved to have the capacity for self-preservation by capitalizing on high levels of social poverty through despotic forms of social control and a fundamental disregard for the lives of others, be they classes, genders, species or generations.

Yet it seems as though we live at a time in which repression is the preferred antidote to tackling crime and, more broadly, social malaise. However, as this book illustrates, both iron-fist policies and negationism have a chronicity to them and tend to accompany moments of political uncertainty. In response, I give the final word to Danilo Dolci, an expert on social poverty:

> "Why is it that, when one part of society sees that another part is sick, why does it not immediately send its best doctors to help it? By now it's an old story, one which we should all have some experience of: the perfect life cannot be resisted, only life resolves. We might exceptionally err, for *sin,* but the systematic plan should be clear by now. He who gives life by going against life is out of [touch with] all reality." (Dolci 1955)

References

Alhojärvi, T., & Hyvärinen, P. (2020). Translating diverse economies in the Anglocene. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, and K. Dombroski (eds.), *The Handbook of Diverse Economies* (pp. 467-475). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Arlacchi, P. (1986). *Mafia business: Mafia ethic and the spirit of capitalism.* M. Ryle (Trans.), London: Verso.

Bayart, J.F. (1989). *L'État en Afrique: La politique du ventre*, Paris, Librairie Fayard.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of Capital. In J. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociolgy of Education* (pp. 241-258). Westport: Greenwood.

Catino, M. (2019). *Mafia organizations: The visible hand of criminal enterprise*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Comaroff, J., Comaroff J. (Eds.) (2006). *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Cottingham, M.D. (2016). Theorizing emotional capital. *Theory and Society* 45**:** 451–470.

Dalla Chiesa, C.A., (1982). *How I fight the mafia*. Interview by Giorgio Bocca, *La Repubblica,* August 10.

Dalla Chiesa, N. (1983). Gli studenti contro la mafia. Note (di merito) per un movimento. *Quaderni piacentini*, n. 11.

Dalla Chiesa, N. (2014). *Manifesto dell'Antimafia.* Torino: Einaudi.

Dalla Chiesa, N. (2017). Defining the Mafia: Between sociology and law. In S. Carnevale, S. Forlati and O. Giolo (eds.), *Redefining Organised Crime: A Challenge for the European Union?* (pp. 225–250). Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Dolci, D. (1955). *Banditi a Partinico,* Bari: Laterza.

Falcone, G. (1990). Three mafias explained in Mexico. In Dalla Chiesa, N. (ed.) with Intoccia, P. (2022). *Giovanni Falcone e Paolo Borsellino. Ostinati e Contrari*. Milano: Melampo. Pp. 65-83.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research, *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3): 167-91.

Gambetta, D. (1993). Th*e Sicilian mafia: The business of private protection*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Rodgers, D, Hazen J.M. (Eds.) (2014). *Global Gangs. Street Violence Across the World.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Hess, H. (1973). *Mafia and mafiosi: The structure of power.* Osars, E. (trans.). Westmead, Farnborough, Hants: Saxon House.

Hirschfeld, K. (2015). *Gangster states: Organized crime, kleptocracy and political collapse.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Jerne, C. (2018). The syntax of social movements: Jam, boxes and other anti-mafia assemblages. *Social Movement Studies,* 17(3): 282-298.

Jerne, C. (2020). Anti-mafia enterprise: Italian strategies to counter violent economies. In J. K. Gibson-Graham, & K. Dombroski (Eds.), *The Handbook of Diverse Economies* (pp. 82-89). Edward Elgar Publishing.

Kleemans, E. R. (2013). Organized crime and the visible hand: A theoretical critique on the economic analysis of organized crime. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *13*(5), 615–629. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895812465296.

Klein, N. (1999). *No Logo.* Knopf Canada and Picador.

Latour, B. (1993). *We have never been modern*. (C. Porter, Trans.). Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Lupo, S. (2004). *Storia della mafia.* (3rd edn.). Roma: Donzelli.

Nordstrom, C. (2007) *Global Outlaws: Crime, Money and Power in the Contemporary World.* Berkley et al.: University of California Press.

Puccio Den, D. (2021). *Mafiacraft: An ethnography of deadly silence.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Tilly, C. (1985). War making and state making as organized crime. In E. Peter, D- Ruschemeyer and T. Skocpol (eds.), *Bringing the State back in,* (Pp. 169-191). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schumpeter, J. (1942). *Capitalism, socialism and democracy.* Nova York: Harper & Brothers.

Varese, F. (2010). What is organised crime? In F. Varese (ed.) *Organized crime* (Vol.1, pp.1-33). Routledge: London and New York.